

**What is Claimed is:**

1. A method of connecting an external program to a server-based database system comprising:

instantiating an applications object to identify all executing applications in said server-based database system, said applications object being an instance of an applications class conforming to a component object model standard for interfacing to a business database;

instantiating an application object dynamically from said instantiated applications object to access at least one form and at least one menu in one of said executing applications;

setting a forms property of said application object to include said at least one form of said executing application;

setting a menus property of said application object to include a menu tree of said executing application, said menu tree identifying all menus in said executing application;

invoking an item event handler within said application object to catch all item events that are non-menu events from said executing application; and

invoking a menu event handler within said application object to catch all menu events from said executing application.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said instantiating an application object comprises: instantiating a plurality of methods in said application object including:

a key board press method to simulate a key press event in the application;

a menu bar message method to send a new active business object; and

a message box to send a modal message box to the application and receive a returned button index.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said instantiating an application object comprises: instantiating a plurality of properties in said application object including:

said forms property; and

said menus property.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said instantiating an application object comprises: instantiating a plurality of events in said application object including:

an item event; and

a menu event.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
responding to an item event, said item event is generated by said instantiated application object.
6. The method of claim 5 wherein said responding to said item event comprises:  
retrieving a form object dynamically from said instantiated application object based on information obtained from said item event.
7. The method of claim 1 further comprises:  
responding to a menu event, said menu event being generated by said instantiated application object.
8. The method of claim 7 wherein said responding to said menu event comprises:  
retrieving a form object dynamically from said instantiated application object based on information obtained from said menu event.
9. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of executable instructions for performing a method comprising:  
instantiating an applications object to identify all executing applications in said server-based database system, said applications object being an instance of an applications class conforming to a component object model standard for interfacing to a business database;  
instantiating an application object dynamically from said instantiated applications object to access at least one form and at least one menu in one of said executing applications;  
setting a forms property of said application object to include said at least one form of said executing application;  
setting a menus property of said application object to include a menu tree of said executing application, said menu tree identifying all menus in said executing application;  
invoking an item event handler within said application object to catch all item events that are non-menu events from said executing application; and  
invoking a menu event handler within said application object to catch all menu events from said executing application.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said instantiating an application object comprises:  
instantiating a plurality of methods in said application object including:  
a key board press method to simulate a key press event in the application;  
a menu bar message method to send a new active business object; and  
a message box to send a modal message box to the application and receive a  
returned button index.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said instantiating an application object  
comprises:  
instantiating a plurality of properties in said application object including:  
said forms property; and  
said menus property.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said instantiating an application object  
comprises:  
instantiating a plurality of events in said application object including:  
an item event; and  
a menu event.

13. The machine-readable medium of claim 12 wherein said method further  
comprises:  
responding to an item event, said item event being generated by said instantiated  
application object.

14. The machine-readable medium of claim 13 wherein the responding to said item  
event comprises:  
retrieving a form object dynamically from said instantiated application object based on  
information obtained from said item event.

15. The machine-readable medium of claim 12 wherein said method further  
comprises:  
responding to a menu event, said menu event being generated by said instantiated  
application object.

16. The machine-readable medium of claim 15 wherein said responding to said menu event comprises:

retrieving a form object dynamically from said instantiated application object based on information obtained from said menu event.

17. A software development kit for providing a user interface to access a business database comprising:

an application programming interface including a plurality of component object model objects and methods; and

an application object for accessing said business database being one of said plurality of component object model objects, said application object to interface with menus and forms currently in use in said business database.

18. The software development kit of claim 17 wherein said application object comprises:

at least one method.

19. The software development kit of claim 17 wherein said forms application object comprises:

at least one property.

20. The software development kit of claim 17 wherein said forms application object comprises:

at least one event.

21. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of executable instructions comprising:

a software development kit for providing a user interface to access a business database, said software development kit including:

an application programming interface including a plurality of component object model objects and methods; and

an application object for accessing said business database being one of said plurality of component object model objects, said application object to interface with menus and forms currently in use in said business database.

22. The machine-readable medium of claim 21 wherein said application object comprises:

at least one method.

23. The machine-readable medium of claim 21 wherein said forms application object comprises:

at least one property.

24. The machine-readable medium of claim 21 wherein said forms application object comprises:

at least one event.

25. A data processing system comprising:

means for instantiating an applications object to identify all executing applications in said server-based database system, said applications object being an instance of an applications class conforming to a component object model standard for interfacing to a business database;

means for instantiating an application object dynamically from said instantiated applications object to access at least one form and at least one menu in one of said executing applications;

means for setting a forms property of said application object to include said at least one form of said executing application;

means for setting a menus property of said application object to include a menu tree of said executing application, said menu tree identifying all menus in said executing application;

means for invoking an item event handler within said application object to catch all item events that are non-menu events from said executing application; and

means for invoking a menu event handler within said application object to catch all menu events from said executing application.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said means for instantiating an application object comprises:

means for instantiating a plurality of methods in said application object including:

a key board press method to simulate a key press event in the application;

a menu bar message method to send a new active business object; and

a message box to send a modal message box to the application and receive a returned button index.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said means for instantiating an application object comprises:

means for instantiating a plurality of properties in said application object including:  
said forms property; and  
said menus property.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said means for instantiating an application object comprises:

means for instantiating a plurality of events in said application object including:  
an item event; and  
a menu event.

29. The data processing system of claim 25 further comprising:  
means for responding to an item event, said item event being generated by said instantiated application object.

30. The data processing system of claim 29 wherein said means for responding to an item event comprises:

means for retrieving a form object dynamically from said instantiated application object based on information obtained from said item event.

31. The data processing system object of claim 25 further comprising:  
means for responding to a menu event, said menu event being generated by said instantiated application object.